Almost 330-year-old mysterious relic with chronometers depicted is kept in a temple in the Ternopil region (photo)

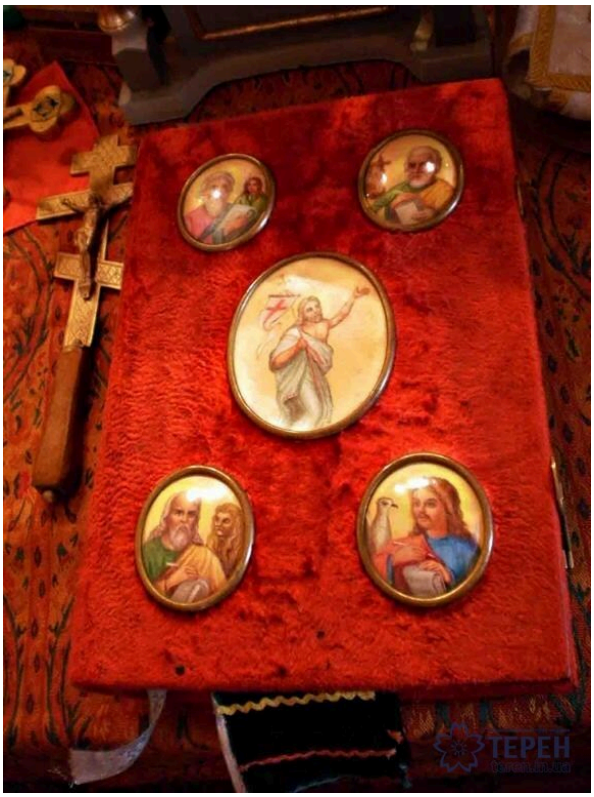
Orestes of Sarmatia ⁝ 6-8 minutes ⁝ 1/29/2018

In the church in the village of Hutysko, parishioners have been preserving a sacred object for centuries – an ancient Gospel.

Archpriest Omelyan Legeta, a priest of the local Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is flipping through the pages of an ancient manuscript with trepidation.

> *- This is our greatest value, the Gospel, published in Lviv, at the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on November 28, 1690. The Holy Gospel was purchased with the funds of the parishioners of the church on April 12, 1747. Their names are inscribed on the last page of the holy relic, - says the priest.*

OLYMPUS DIGITAL CAMERA



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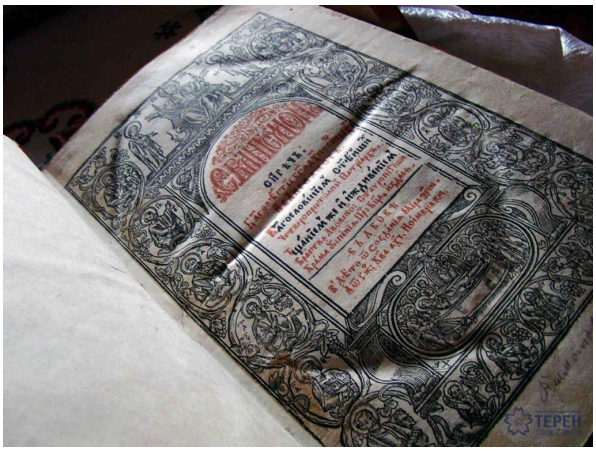
This is the so-called "Lviv Gospel", published on November 28, 1690 by the printing house of the Holy Assumption Orthodox Stavropegial Brotherhood. The unique edition is considered one of the best Lviv Ukrainian liturgical prints of the early modern era. The book was published by Semyon Stavnytsky, and one of the engravers was Yevstahiy Zavadovsky. At the beginning of the 18th century, the book was purchased from the brotherhood by Vasyl "nicknamed Lukavy" for one hundred gold pieces and donated to the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Myklashiv. Later, the book became the property of the library of the Theological Scientific Society, and today one of its copies is kept in the collection of the F. P. Maksymenko Department of Manuscripts, Old Printed Books and Rare Books of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. By the way, three years ago the book became symbolic for the Lviv community, because it was on it that the newly elected mayor Andriy Sadovyi took an oath to honestly serve the city's residents.



g02

Old-print paper is white with watermarks (filigree) and a solid surface texture, sometimes with a warm shade of old ivory. Experts say that it absorbs ink well, which gives the print an attractive velvety appearance.

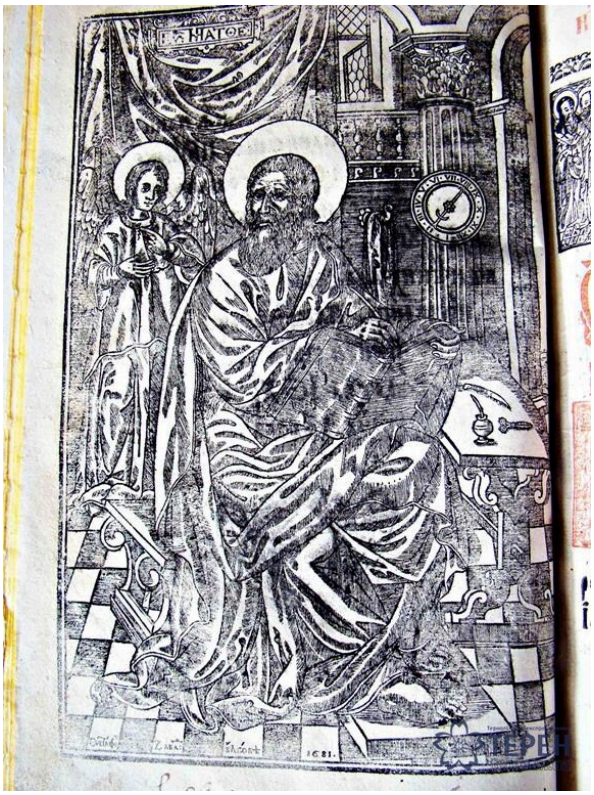
In the altar Gospel in Gutysk, the title page - the title and the next - the frontispiece, as well as the screen before the text, the initials and final letters have been preserved. According to historian Yulia Shustova , in the Gospel, a copy of which is kept in Gubysk, the engravings of Eustafiy Zavadovsky with images of the evangelists have become perhaps his best works. They all have the engraver's signatures.

g03

Engravings depicting the evangelists are made in the Baroque style. All the evangelists are depicted in interiors - spacious, bright rooms, sitting on different chairs, draperies were used to decorate the interiors. Next to Matthew and Luke, we see tables in the Baroque style, on which lie writing utensils: inkwells and pens, and on Matthew's table there is also a folding knife and scissors. The evangelists are depicted with their symbols (an angel - next to Matthew; a lion lying at the feet of Mark; a calf - at the feet of Luke; an eagle - next to John). Such an iconography of the evangelists was characteristic of baroque book engravings and miniatures.

g05

These engravings are unusual to some extent in that each of them depicts a clock. At the same time, all the clocks differ in type. Near the evangelist Matthew on a column we see an image of a mechanical clock with a round dial and one hour hand. The clock scale contains twelve divisions marked with Roman numerals. The start of the hour count is from the lower part of the dial behind the sun. The arrow, decorated with the image of a crescent moon, points to the eighth hour. On the wall in the room of the evangelist Mark hangs a mechanical clock with a round dial and one hour hand, but the clock scale, unlike the previous one, contains twenty-four divisions marked with Arabic numerals. The start of the hour count is from the upper part of the dial, decorated with the image of the sun. The arrow stopped between the fifth and sixth divisions. On the desk of the Evangelist Luke stands an hourglass, the contents of which are half poured from the upper part of the flask into the lower one. The Evangelist John is depicted at work on an open terrace, which is flooded with sunlight (the image of the sun is in the upper left corner of the engraving) and decorated with a sundial. The arrow, as you can see, points to the fifth hour. This depiction of the clocks in the engravings is probably not accidental. Chronometric information was intended to supplement the traditional iconography of the Evangelists with another semantic level of reading the text of the engraving, which was a characteristic technique of Baroque art, where the polysemantic nature of symbolism was of great importance. In Baroque symbolism, the sun and the moon were extremely important symbols as the embodiment of day and night. These symbols are present in the images of mechanical clocks in the engravings of Eustafiy Zavadovsky depicting the Evangelists. Perhaps the clocks were intended to symbolize a certain part of the day. The sundial, therefore, symbolizes the day, and the hourglass - the night; a mechanical clock with a twelve-part dial, showing eight o'clock, indicates evening (it is no coincidence that the hand is decorated with a crescent moon), and a mechanical clock with a twenty-four-part dial with the image of the sun indicates morning (half past five).



g04

Perhaps they should be interpreted ambiguously. The clocks on the engraving indicate the lunar and solar nature of the four Gospels or the symbols of the evangelists. The solar symbols, the signs of the Sun, are undoubtedly the lion and the eagle, the lunar ones are the angel and the calf). Hence the correspondence of the evangelists to the four parts of the day (Matthew - evening, Mark - morning, Luke - night, John - day). The symbolism of the clocks, used in the iconography of the evangelists by Eustafiy Zavadovsky, including in the gospel kept in Gubysk, is one of the most striking embodiments of baroque aesthetics in Ukrainian book graphics of the second half of the 17th century.

g06

This period is a brilliant stage in the development of Ukrainian book printing, associated with the achievements of Lviv and Ostroh printers, with significant achievements, primarily in scientific and liturgical book publishing, because during this period Ukrainians were recognized leaders of the Slavic world in the field of book printing.

g07

A detailed study of the history of our printing is of great importance to us, Ukrainians, because it particularly vividly emphasizes the state of our ancient culture, it precisely shows what level of culture we had in ancient times. The state of our ancient printing gave us then a full opportunity not only to occupy an honorable place among the entire Slavic world, but also to be equal in the technique of our publications to the cultural peoples of Europe.

Photo by the author